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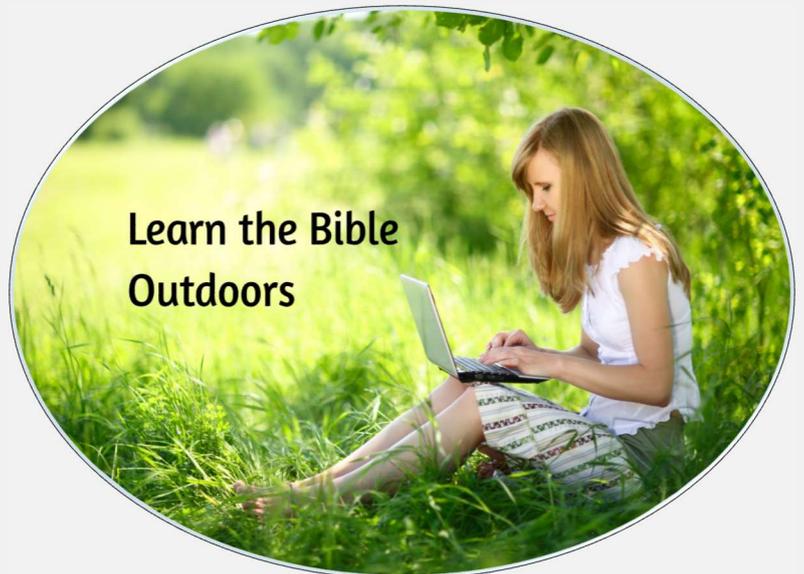
Absent from the Body

Present

With the Lord.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Absent from the Body Present with the Lord.

Topics.

- Naked without a body.
- Groaning in the mortal body.
- Absent from the body present with the Lord.
- Sleeping in Christ.
- We walk by faith, not by sight.
- Christ the first to be raised.

A NEW BODY

- **2 Corinthians 5:1-4:** For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling. ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

When the earthly corrupted mortal body that we have inherited from our father Adam with its sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that we live in dies, God will give all those who belong to the family of Christ an eternal and immortal body when they are resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory.

NOTICE: the body we now have is called a tent contrasted to the eternal body being called a building.

Naked without a body: naked or unclothed in this context means to be without a body (i.e., dead) while to be clothed means the spirit has a body to dwell in and to be further clothed means our mortal body is changed to an immortal and eternal body. Mortality (death) will be overtaken by life at the return of Christ when all who belong to him are resurrected and receive their eternal and immortal body.

Groaning in the mortal body: Paul is saying that those in their mortal body are burdened because the mortal body is full of sinful dysfunctions and aberrations, it gets sick and tired, it feels pain and deteriorates and eventually dies thus we groan until we are clothed with our new eternal and immortal body which will be totally free of all these troubles and sorrows.

Clothed and unclothed and further clothed: clothed refers to our spirit being clothed with the mortal body of flesh that we not live in, and the word unclothed.

Unclothed: refers to a spirit without a body.

Further clothed: refers to the spirit and mortal body of flesh and blood we now have being clothed (superseded) with immortality and eternal life. Paul is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that the Christian faith does not teach that we will exist as eternal spirits without bodies as many of the pagan faiths believed during the time of the apostles, but rather the Good News of the Gospel proclaims our spirit will be clothed in an eternal and immortal body.

ABSENT FROM THE BODY PRESENT WITH THE LORD

- **2 Cor. 5:5-8:** He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Before the foundations of the world God has prepared this immortal life in His eternal plan of salvation for all those who faithfully trust in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation and belong to his family.

The Spirit as a guarantee: refers to the Spirit of righteousness that God gives as a pure and free gift to all who by faith belong to the family of Christ and to the Holy Spirit and God's promise that all who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal life. Those who belong to Christ are physically absent from the Lord while they remain alive in their mortal body. Paul would rather be absent from his mortal body (meaning he would rather die) so that he could literally be present with the Lord and not just present with him by faith only as we all are while we remain in our mortal bodies of flesh. Paul clearly has no fear of death, but actually looks forward to it because he knows he will then be physically with the Lord clothed in an eternal and immortal body such was the love Paul had for Christ.

Sleeping in Christ: when a person who belongs to Christ dies the Bible says they have no knowledge and know nothing, they are totally unaware of it and are in a perfect state of peace, this state is called sleeping in Christ because they have no consciousness so there is no time it is very similar to someone in a deep sleep there is no awareness of time, when the person wakes they have no idea of whether four, seven, or twelve hours have passed. Likewise, because there is no time in death the moment a Christian dies is the moment they are in the Kingdom of God and with the LORD, for them it is instant, even though many years may have passed by in our world's time. David died thousands of years ago, but the moment he is resurrected will be like the moment he breathed his last breath, because for him there is no awareness of time, so it is for every Christian from death to Christ is instant.

Death to the Christian is similar to a person in a coma: a person in a coma has no consciousness of time, time does not exist to them, when they wake, they often think only a day or so has gone by, when in actual fact several years may have passed yet they think they are waking up, the same day, or next day after they went to sleep. The person in the coma or in death is totally unaware of any time that they have spent in the coma or being dead. Death to those who belong to Christ is much the same as the person in the coma, the dead or those who are sleeping in Christ have absolutely no consciousness of time so for them, the moment they die, is the moment they are instantly with the Lord, even though many years may have passed during the time they have been dead (i.e., sleeping in Christ).

It is the same principle as a person who goes into hospital for an operation: the patient is given an anaesthetic and put to sleep, surgeons cut them up and take bits out, over the next few hours, yet the patient is totally unaware of it they wake up and have absolutely no idea of the time that has passed, therefore when Paul says, absent from the body, present with the Lord it is a true statement, even though he may have spent years sleeping in Christ.

NOTE: a second reason a Christians death is called sleeping in Christ is because their death is only temporary.

Being asleep in Christ means: everyone who dies in Christ is kept in the eternal mind and memory of God. Jesus said:

- Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground without the father knowing it and even the hairs of our head are all numbered therefore we should not fear death because we are of more value than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31).

The entire person (i.e., body, spirit, mind and consciousness) remains sleeping in Christ until the first resurrection (Rev. 20:5) when Christ returns and all who are asleep in the Lord are woken up at the blast of the angels trumpet and raised from the dead to everlasting glory and clothed with their eternal and immortal body.

We walk by faith, not by sight: (v7) in this context means we are with Christ by faith since unlike the apostles we have not and do not at this present time literally see him as they did.

CHRIST THE FIRST TO BE RAISED

- **2 Cor. 15:21-23:** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Death came by the one-man Adam because of disobedience, but eternal life comes by Christ because of his obedience. All who are saved in Christ are not counted righteous because of their own righteousness, but because of Christ's obedience and his righteousness. When Jesus rose from the grave it was not just his body that rose, but his entire being i.e., (body, mind, consciousness and spirit) clearly showing us all that it is not just the body that is raised to eternal life, but the entire being of a believer in Christ.

- The first to be raised was Christ that is why he is called the firstfruit of those to be raised from the dead to eternal glory.
- The second group to be raised are all those who are asleep (died) in Christ.
- The third group to be raised are all those who are alive when Christ returns.

Though we do not know what will be like in eternity John tells us on the Great Day when Christ appears all God's children will see him as he is and be gloriously changed to be like him (1 John 3:2). When this awesome event takes place, we will no longer have to live by faith but will see Christ as he is and shall forever be with him.

NOTE: the words "Christ the firstfruits" (v23) which mean Christ is the first to be raised to eternal glory and everlasting life show that no-one yet has been raised to heaven since if they had it would mean that Christ was not the first to be raised to eternal life and that Paul is mistaken.

ABSENT FROM THE BODY PRESENT WITH THE LORD

- **1 Cor. 15:51-55:** Behold! *I tell you a mystery.* We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, (incorruptible in KJV), and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body (corruptible body in KJV) must put on the imperishable, (incorruption in KJV), and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable (corruptible in KJV) puts on the imperishable, (incorruption in KJV) and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵"O earth, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

NOTICE: the use of the word "We" shows that it is the entire body mind, consciousness and spirit that is raised not just the body being united with a spirit in heaven as some religious circles believe.

Paul continues to give an even clearer picture of the resurrection from the dead by explaining the mystery of the dead being raised. Here is the stunning and awesome power of God all who are asleep in Christ will in one glorious moment be raised and changed in the twinkling of an eye, at

the last trumpet the dead will be raised incorruptible and those who are alive when this event takes place will be changed. The body we now live in that tends toward sin will put on incorruption and our mortal and decaying body will be clothed with immortality. For further information concerning sleeping in Christ see, the notes:

- Following (2 Corinthians 5:5-8) titled Sleeping in Christ (above).

THOSE ASLEEP WILL BE RAISED

- **1 Thess. 4:16-18:** For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Here is the wonder, majesty and glory of the Christian faith, Christ will return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords and all those who are sleeping in Christ and those who are alive will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air and for all eternity forever be with the Lord.

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

Amongst the moments of joy this world also brings us sorrow, grief, heartache and struggle, being a faithful devoted disciple of the Lord does not guarantee we will be free of troubles and sorrow. This is why Paul says, "Encourage one another with these words" (v18). True peace comes to our mind by having an eternal focus on the glory that is to come and looking forward to the eternal city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God (Heb. 11:10). It is living with a mindset that while we live to achieve our goals and provide for our families and have unbelieving friends we are all the time aware that we are strangers and aliens living in this world and that our true fellow citizens are our brothers and sisters in Christ and our true citizenship is in heaven from which we await our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:19) (Philip 3:20).

Paul's attitude toward death was that while alive he would always honour the Lord and labour for him, but to die and be with Christ would be far better so much so that he says, "It would be hard to choose between the two" (if he was able to make such a choice). This is because even though Paul considered death to be gain for him he was aware that his life on earth could benefit many others and advance the Good News of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God (Philip. 1:20-23).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
